

Canberra Botanic Gardens

GROWING NATIVE PLANTS

Vol. 5, 1975



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Hibiscus trionum

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DESIGNING NATIVE PLANT GARDENS

with special reference to the selection of species for particular landscape use

The subtitle of this article has been selected for several reasons.

Firstly, the theory of landscape design is a complex subject which cannot be covered in a single paper. It should also be dealt with by someone trained and competent in that field.

Secondly, gardens and gardening are very personal matters. A garden reflects the character of the person who tends it and part of the joy of designing a garden is the incorporation of one's own ideas.

The selection of suitable native plants to stock the garden, however, is an area where some assistance may be required. Many species are not well known and it is hoped that after reading this article, one may understand more fully the uses to which native plants can be put when designing a landscape.

A few general points on design should be made first.

Any garden should fulfil four main requirements:

- It should be a thing of beauty.
- It should provide pleasure and recreation for the owner.
- It should provide privacy for outdoor family living.
- It should be convenient to maintain.

Let us consider each of these requirements in more detail.

A thing of beauty

As we have heard so often, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. The irregular and gnarled form of an old *Banksia* will be preferred by some to the stately and formal *Cedrus deodara*. The latter, however, has its place in certain landscaping styles and will be the choice of many a discerning gardener.

A well-designed garden should add beauty to the house, blending it into its surroundings so that it becomes part of a *whole* scheme. In addition a garden should beautify the community. This, of course, can be done

most effectively if one can work with neighbours in creating a combined effect. In so doing, there is no need for each garden to lose its individuality, but a group of gardens may cohere by neighbours paying attention to fenceline plantings and design of fences.

Several components give this overall picture of beauty and these must be considered individually.

1. *Colour* is probably the most obvious. One should plan for colour on a year-round basis. With a basically native plant garden it is normal to expect a flush of flowering in spring. However, mention will be made later of useful plants for off-season flowering. Another aspect of colour is that of *foliage colour* and interesting highlights may be formed by the introduction of grey-leaved plants.

2. *Foliage texture* is to some degree related to colour, and by the intelligent use of a variety of leaf types interesting effects can be created even when flowering is somewhat sparse. Consider the dark green gloss of a large-leaved rainforest tree compared to the hairy glaucous appearance of an arid area shrub.

3. *Form and ultimate height* of plants is important and again variation is the keynote. More detail will be given later in this regard.

4. *Water* can play a vital part in any landscape and the degree to which it is used depends on the imagination and pocket of the owner. A simple informal pool can add interest and coolness to a corner of the garden. It may even be placed as a focal point to which the eye is led. Moving water is, of course, even more attractive, but remember that a poorly designed waterfall is much worse than no waterfall at all. Planting must be carefully carried out around water features ensuring that plants which grow naturally in such an environment are used.

5. *Fragrance* is a point that is often overlooked. Native plants are by no means lacking in this property both in foliage and in flower.

Some *Prostanthera* spp. may be used where they are brushed by visitors. *Boronia* spp., particularly *B. megastigma* and *B. serrulata* should be sited near outdoor living areas where the perfume may be enjoyed. In warmer areas some epiphytic orchids can add appeal to the fragrance.

Pleasure and recreation

In building and tending his garden the owner must derive a sense of pleasure. Pleasure is achievement, pleasure is discovering new flowers, pleasure is relaxing in a peaceful setting.



Eucalyptus pulverulenta: *Eucalyptus*—from Greek words, eu, good or well, and kalypto, meaning one cover, alluding to the calyx which forms a close lid over the flower bud; *pulverulenta*—refers to the powdery covering of the leaves

Recreation is more important now than it has ever been before because we have more time for leisure. A garden should not be a source of worry where one is forced to mow the lawns or do the weeding. If one doesn't relax in the garden then a switch to bowls, football or fishing is recommended.

Privacy for outdoor living

While part of a garden is usually visible from the street and may be admired by passers-by, it is advisable to have a section of it for outdoor living, where one may entertain one's friends without the visual participation of the neighbours. Such an area should provide a barbecue, seating, sand tray or whatever personal needs apply to the family.

Convenience

Convenience in garden maintenance is important. Weeds can be minimised by mulching and also *regular* weeding to prevent seeding. Mulching also reduces the need for watering. In dry areas, thought could be given to an underground watering system with fixed sprinklers. Lawns are high maintenance luxuries and an early decision must be made as to whether a lawn is required or not.

If children are in the family, then one must have a suitable play area—the lawn is almost essential in such cases.

If lawns are used, then mowing strips should be seriously considered. Although they embody an element of formality, their use facilitates edge cutting and prevents grass from invading flower beds.

As well as convenience of maintenance, we should consider convenience of layout. For instance, barbecue and entertaining areas should be sited reasonably near the house.

Planning the garden

With these basic points in mind the gar-

dener may set about planning his garden.

It is advisable to put the plan on paper, even if only roughly to scale. This helps to ensure that important points are not forgotten and gives the owner some idea of costs and quantities of materials and plants required.

Landform is important. If the block of land is sloping or rocky, then it is usually much easier to develop an attractive landscape by using existing natural features.

If the block is flat then it is worthwhile either excavating and using the soil as fill elsewhere or importing topsoil to develop pleasing and interesting contours. If a water feature is to be considered then it should be designed into the landscape at this stage.

Several other early decisions must be made:

- Is a lawn to be incorporated into the design?
- Is the garden to be all native?
- Is an area to be set aside for a play area?
- Is a barbecue or entertaining area intended?
- What fences are to be used?

In planning the garden, one should develop a series of vistas which are not apparent all at once. They should be revealed as one walks the winding pathways of the garden, presenting an element of surprise as new and pleasing views appear. It is important to remember that one should be able to look into the garden from inside the house.

Most native gardens are relatively informal because the irregular shapes of many native plants encourage this type of design.

There is a tendency in gardening generally to move away from massed annual displays and to use more shrubs for ease of maintenance. There is, however, a place for annuals even in the truly informal garden by introducing them in small groups and allowing them to seed themselves in future years, thinning them as required.

Finally, before we discuss the selection of species for a specific use one very important point should be made. Always consider the ultimate height and spread of trees and shrubs when making a planting plan. Careful thought at the planning stage will prevent much heartache in ten or twenty years' time, when the roots of an enormous *Ficus* are undermining the house foundations or Johnny has to have the light on all day because the *Acacia* blocks out the window.

In the selection of species for a particular landscape use, a number of different categories will be examined. *It should be noted that heights and flowering times are given as for Canberra and may vary considerably in other climates.*

Doryanthes excelsa: *Doryanthes*—from the Greek, meaning spear-flower; *excelsa*—from the Latin, *excelsus*, meaning high, lofty, referring to the tall growth of this species



Off-season flowers

An attempt should be made to have some colour in the garden throughout the year and

careful selection of species is necessary to ensure this.

Recommended species	Approx flowering time	Approx height (metres)	Remarks
<i>Ceratopetalum gummiiferum</i>	Dec-March	4	Red colour is obtained from enlarged calyx after flowering; varies greatly with climate
<i>Crowea saligna</i>	Mar-July	0.7	
<i>C. exalata</i>	Feb-June	0.7	
<i>Acacia botrycephala</i>	April-May	2	Variable in colour from cream to yellow
<i>A. beckleri</i>	May-June	2	Large, globular flower heads
<i>Banksia spinulosa</i>	April-Aug	1.5	
<i>B. ericifolia</i>	April-June	4	
<i>Alyogyne hakeifolia</i>	Dec-Jan	2	Large pink or cream flowers with dark centres
<i>Angophora cordifolia</i>	Jan-Feb	4	Attractive to butterflies and beetles
<i>Anigozanthos flavidus</i>	Dec-Feb	2	Flower spikes may reach 2 m but foliage rarely exceeds 0.7 m; flower colour green to red
<i>A. pulcherrimus</i>	Jan-Feb	1	Yellow flowers
<i>Baeckea linifolia</i>	Feb-May	2	A pendulous shrub which appreciates moisture
<i>Blandfordia nobilis</i>	Jan-Feb	0.5	Yellow and red bells
<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	Jan-Feb	3	White flowers followed by attractive brown fruits
<i>Eucalyptus leucoxylon</i> var. <i>macrocarpa</i>	April-May	5+	Red, pendulous flowers
<i>E. platypus</i>	Jan-Feb	4	Green flowers with long finger-like operculum
<i>Correa pulchella</i>	May-June	0.5	Many colour forms exist
<i>Melaleuca thymifolia</i>	Nov-Mar	1	Longer flowering period in milder climate
<i>Prostanthera marifolia</i>	Feb-April	0.7	South coast (NSW) form reliable summer flowers
<i>Persoonia pinifolia</i>	Feb-Mar	3	Attractive in fruit as well as flower

Foliage Colour

Australian plants have a reputation for being generally dull green and providing little variation in colour when not in flower. If one makes his selection of species with

this problem in mind an interesting variation can be obtained.

The following list includes species other than those that are dull green.

Recommended species	Approx height (metres)	Foliage colour	Remarks
<i>Eucalyptus cinerea</i>	14	Grey	Often retains its juvenile foliage over most of the tree
<i>E. tetragona</i>	5	Grey	Tends to make a bushy shrub in cultivation; mealy square branches
<i>E. pulverulenta</i>	8	Grey	A slender tree
<i>Grevillea bitermata</i>	Generally prostrate	Light green	Although this species may grow occasional upright branches, pruning will keep it prostrate
<i>Calocephalus brownii</i>	0.5	Silver grey	Resistant to salt spray
<i>Melaleuca incana</i>	3	Grey	Weeping foliage
<i>Acacia podalyriifolia</i>	5	Grey	
<i>A. decurrens</i>	10	Dark green	The green of the younger branches is also attractively bright
<i>Eremophila subfloccosa</i>	0.5	Grey	Foliage is very hairy and bush tends to spread to 1 m
<i>Atriplex nummularia</i>	2	Grey	
<i>Rhagodia spinescens</i>	0.7	Grey	
var. <i>deltophylla</i>			
<i>Enchylaena tomentosa</i>	Prostrate	Grey	
<i>Casuarina torulosa</i>	7	Red in winter	In cold climates such as Canberra this species develops an attractive winter colour.
<i>Cassia artemisioides</i>	1.5	Grey	
<i>Pittosporum rhombifolium</i>	7	Bright green	Attractive in fruit
<i>Leptospermum petersonii</i>	4	Red in winter	This colour develops in cold climates but selected forms are required to resist frost.
<i>Prostanthera nivea</i>	1.5	Grey	
var. <i>induta</i>			
<i>Nothofagus moorei</i>	Tall tree	Red new growth	A rainforest tree hardy in Canberra

Foliage texture

By varying leaf shape and texture in a landscape, interesting relief can be obtained

even when flowering is sparse.

Recommended species	Approx height (metres)	Remarks
<i>Banksia robur</i>	2	Large, rigid leaves with pale underside
<i>B. speciosa</i>	5	Deeply serrated glaucous leaves
<i>B. grandis</i>	8	Deeply serrated rigid leaves
<i>Pittosporum undulatum</i>	9	Shiny, bright green leaves
<i>Casuarina</i> spp.	Various	Needle-like branchlets
* <i>Alocasia macrorrhizos</i>	1	Very large soft, green leaves
<i>Macrozamia communis</i>	1	Stiff, fern-like leaves
* <i>Licuala muelleri</i>	6+	A fan palm
* <i>Pandanus</i> spp.	Various	Long, curved, often toothed leaves
* <i>Musa banksii</i>	4	A native banana
<i>Doryanthes excelsa</i>	4	Sword-like leaves to 1 m, with tall 4 m flower spike bearing red flowers
<i>Xanthorrhoea</i> spp.	Various	Although slow growing, an attractive plant may be obtained in three to four years from seed

* Species subject to frost damage.

Water feature

Plants for use in and around water features should blend with their surroundings. To do this, it is best to choose species that grow naturally in damp places or at least adapt well to a damp environment and have

the strap-like leaves of many such plants.

Species listed below are classified as to whether they are totally aquatic or whether they merely enjoy damp conditions.

Recommended species	Approx. height (metres)	Aquatic or otherwise	Remarks
<i>Azolla</i> spp.	—	Aquatic	Floats on surface of water
* <i>Nymphaea gigantea</i>	—	Aquatic	Leaves float, large blue flowers
<i>Nymphoides indica</i>	—	Aquatic	Leaves float, flowers white
<i>N. crenata</i>	—	Aquatic	Leaves float, flowers yellow
<i>Ottelia ovalifolia</i>	—	Aquatic	Leaves float, flowers white
* <i>O. alismoides</i>	—	Aquatic	Leaves float, flowers white
<i>Myriophyllum</i> spp.	—	Aquatic	Some emergent flowers
* <i>Nelumbo nucifera</i>	—	Aquatic	Large leaves held above water; large pink flowers
<i>Marsilea</i> spp.	—	Semi-aquatic	Will survive out of water, but most attractive when leaves are floating
<i>Pratia pedunculata</i>	Prostrate	Semi-aquatic	Blue flowers produced at best when grown as terrestrial
<i>Helmholtzia glaberrima</i>	1	Terrestrial	Prefers shade, handsome pink flowers and sword-like leaves
<i>Callistemon speciosus</i>	2	Terrestrial	Red brushes borne in early summer
<i>Anigozanthos flavidus</i>	2	Terrestrial	Flower colour varies from greens to red tones
<i>Lomandra</i> spp.	0.5	Terrestrial	Most <i>Lomandra</i> spp. are valuable plants for this purpose; <i>L. spicata</i> particularly useful
<i>Sowerbaea juncea</i>	0.4	Terrestrial	
<i>Diplarrhena moraea</i>	0.5	Terrestrial	Will grow well in dry locations also
<i>Dianella</i> spp.	Up to 1	Terrestrial	Blue fruits are attractive as well as flowers
<i>Ranunculus</i> spp.	Up to 0.3	Terrestrial or semi-aquatic	Most species grow well in damp locations

* Species subject to frost damage.

Fragrance

Insufficient attention is usually given to the use of fragrant plants. They should be stra-

tegically placed near ways of common access or near frequently opened windows.

Recommended species	Approx height (metres)	Remarks
<i>Boronia megastigma</i>	1	
<i>B. heterophylla</i>	1.5	
<i>B. serrulata</i>	1	Good drainage and a cool root run
<i>Prostanthera incisa</i>	1.5	Foliage is fragrant when crushed
<i>Dichopogon strictus</i>	0.3	If a number of these small lilies are flowering together, a strong chocolate smell is apparent
<i>D. fimbriatus</i>	0.3	on a warm day
<i>Sowerbaea juncea</i>	0.4	Vanilla perfume
* <i>Grevillea leucopteris</i>	2	Very strong perfume, particularly at night; not to everyone's liking
<i>Melaleuca viminea</i>	2	Strong nectar, attractive to insects
<i>Acacia suaveolens</i>	2	
* <i>Dendrobium dae</i>	—	Epiphytic orchid for warm areas only
<i>Mentha diemenica</i>	Prostrate	Strong, mint smell of foliage
* <i>Leptospermum petersonii</i>	3	Lemon scent of foliage
<i>Eucalyptus citriodora</i>	12	Lemon scent of foliage

* Species subject to frost damage.

Annuals

While the growing of massed annuals tends to be left these days to parks and botanic gardens plantings, the informal scattering of groups of annuals can add interest and colour to a landscape.

Recommended species	Sowing time	Flowering time	Remarks
<i>Helipterum manglesii</i>	July	Oct-Nov	Frost tender; sow in flats
<i>H. roseum</i>	July	Oct-Nov	Frost tender; sow in flats
<i>H. albicans</i>	July	Oct-Dec	Variable in colour from white to yellow; may also be used as perennial
<i>Helichrysum bracteatum</i>	Aug	Nov-Feb	Many forms are available
<i>Schoenia cassiniana</i>	June	Sept-Oct	These may be direct sown even in cold areas
<i>Isotoma axillaris</i>	Sept	Nov-Jan	Some early growth problems have been encountered; may be best to direct sow
<i>Trachymene caerulea</i>	Sept	Nov-Jan	Pinch out growing tips to encourage lateral growths
<i>Hibiscus trionum</i>	Sept	Dec-Jan	Yellow flowers with dark centres
<i>Brachycome iberidifolia</i>	July	Oct-Dec	Slightly frost tender

Boronia serrulata: *Boronia*—after an Italian, Francesco Borone, who accompanied botanical expeditions in the 18th century; *serrulata*—from the Latin, serrate, referring to the minute-toothed leaves



Ground covers

Ground covers are an important part of most styles of landscaping and the Australian flora possesses many of outstanding merit.

The table below indicates the approximate

height and spacing for plants grown in Canberra. It might be expected that growth rates will be faster in less severe climates and plants may be spaced a little further apart.

<i>Recommended species</i>	<i>Approx height (metres)</i>	<i>Planting centres (metres)</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
<i>Grevillea x gaudichaudii</i>	Prostrate	2	Red flowers in spring
<i>G. laurifolia</i>	Prostrate	1.5	Red flowers in spring
<i>Scleranthus biflorus</i>	Prostrate	0.3	Moss-like appearance
<i>Melaleuca violacea</i>	0.5	1	A flat-topped form of this species is excellent for this purpose
<i>Phyla nodiflora</i>	Prostrate	0.3	Plant as runners; may become invasive, but good for quick cover
<i>Kunzea pomifera</i>	0.2	0.6	Perfect drainage essential
<i>Myoporum parvifolium</i>	Prostrate	1	Starry-white flowers
<i>Senecio laetus</i> ssp. <i>maritimus</i>	0.2	0.5	Yellow flowers for long period
<i>Casuarina nana</i>	1.5	2.5	Good, high ground cover
<i>Australina muelleri</i>	0.2	0.5	Suitable for shady situations only
<i>Grevillea australis</i> (prostrate form)	Prostrate	0.6	Small white flowers in spring
<i>Pratia pedunculata</i>	Prostrate	0.3	Suitable for damp situations; blue flowers
<i>Goodenia heteromera</i>	Prostrate	0.3	Yellow flowers for long period in summer and autumn
<i>Helichrysum apiculatum</i>	Prostrate	0.5	A wide-leaf form of this plant makes an excellent ground cover
<i>Neopaxia australasica</i>	Prostrate	0.5	The alpine form is the most attractive but more difficult to cultivate

Rockery plants

Plants referred to in this section are mostly less than 50 cm high and with little tendency to spread. They may be used to fill

small corners or in a rockery. Some of the small species are suitable for strips between driveway tracks.

<i>Recommended species</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
<i>Lechenaultia biloba</i>	Brilliant blue flowers in spring; requires good drainage
<i>Conostylis aculeata</i>	Yellow flowers in spring
<i>Patersonia occidentalis</i>	Purple flowers in late spring
<i>P. sericea</i>	Purple flowers in late spring
<i>Ptilotus spathulatus</i>	Very small plant with greenish flower spikes
<i>P. exaltatus</i>	Mauve flowers; requires good drainage
<i>Cheiranthra cyanea</i>	Deep blue flowers with yellow anthers
<i>Pelargonium rodneyanum</i>	Mauve flowers
<i>P. australe</i>	Flower colour and form very variable
<i>Ajuga australis</i>	Purple or pink flowers
<i>Thysanotus juncifolius</i>	Purple, fringed flowers in late spring
<i>T. multiflorus</i>	Mauve flowers in late spring
<i>Lotus australis</i>	Pink, pea flowers in spring
<i>Halgania cyanea</i>	Blue flowers in spring
<i>Blandfordia nobilis</i>	Red and yellow bells in summer
<i>B. grandiflora</i>	Red and yellow bells in summer
<i>Anigozanthos humilis</i>	Good drainage required; orange flowers
<i>A. viridis</i>	Bright green flowers

Climbers

Species mentioned in this section are made to climb on a fence or other support. those that either climb naturally or can be

<i>Recommended species</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>	Purple pea flowers in early spring
<i>H. comptoniana</i>	Blue-purple flowers in spring
* <i>Kennedia coccinea</i>	Orange/red flowers, very floriferous
* <i>Kennedia nigricans</i>	Vigorous, black/yellow flowers
<i>Clematis aristata</i>	Cream flowers followed by attractive fruits
<i>C. microphylla</i>	Cream flowers followed by attractive fruits
<i>Sollya heterophylla</i>	Blue flowers
<i>Billardiera pictus</i>	Cream/yellow flowers with dark stripe
<i>B. ringens</i>	Orange flowers
<i>Passiflora cinnabarina</i>	Red flowers
* <i>Pandorea pandorana</i>	Very variable in colour; spring flowering; slightly frost tender
* <i>P. jasminoides</i>	Large pink flowers
* <i>Tecomanthe hillii</i>	Suitable for warm climates only; large red trumpet flowers
* <i>Milletia megasperma</i>	Suitable for warm climates only; similar to <i>Wisteria</i>
<i>Eustrephus latifolius</i>	White flowers followed by orange fruits
* <i>Hibbertia dentata</i>	Slightly frost tender, yellow flowers
* <i>Cissus antarctica</i>	Insignificant flowers, good quick cover for warmer areas

* These species require some protection from frost.

Pandorea jasminoides: *Pandorea*—
from a Greek mythological name,
Pandora; *jasminoides*—vegetatively
resembling jasmine



Conical and columnar plants

Plants that are shaped like a cone or column such as some of the exotic conifers are often preferred for more formal landscape work. There are, however, some native plants that are generally cone or column-

shaped but of rather looser texture and which can be used effectively in an informal native garden. They may be used as relief from the more rounded appearance of many shrubs.

Recommended species	Approx height (metres)	Remarks
<i>Callitris rhomboidea</i>	6	Columnar with tips of branches drooping
<i>C. endlicheri</i>	8-10	Conical
<i>Casuarina torulosa</i>	6	Loosely conical; foliage reddens in winter in cold areas
<i>Leptospermum lanigerum</i> (form)	3	This shrub is variable in shape but a form collected from heathland on Wilson's Promontory, Victoria, develops a columnar form
<i>Agonis juniperina</i>	4	Loosely columnar
* <i>Grevillea excelsior</i>	3	Orange flowers; a difficult plant to cultivate but well worth the attempt; good drainage
<i>Eucalyptus coccifera</i>	5	Generally conical
<i>Eugenia luehmannii</i> syn. <i>Syzygium luehmannii</i>	4	Red fruits, red new growth and fluffy white flower; not tested in Canberra

* Require protection from frost.

Attractive fruits

Most shrubs are grown for their flowers, but some give an extra bonus by having colourful fruits as well. In many cases their

beauty exceeds the beauty of the flowers. Some of these are also attractive to birds.

Recommended species	Approx height (metres)	Remarks
<i>Dianella caerulea</i>	1	Blue fruits
<i>D. tasmanica</i>	1	Blue fruits
<i>Pittosporum rhombifolium</i>	5	Masses of orange fruits
* <i>P. revolutum</i>	2	Red seeds in orange fruits; slightly frost tender
<i>Hakea gibbosa</i>	3	Large woody follicles contrast to the needle-like leaves
<i>Eustrephus latifolius</i>	Climber	Orange fruits
* <i>Connarus connaroides</i>	Climber	Brilliant red fruits; a rainforest climber for warm climates
<i>Ceratopetalum gummiiferum</i>	4	Calyx lobes which colour red as fruit ripens are main attraction
<i>Billardiera longiflora</i>	Climber	Purplish berries
<i>Acmena smithii</i>	10	White to pink succulent fruits
<i>Dodonaea attenuata</i>	3	Should be propagated by cutting to ensure good fruit colour; red to purple
<i>Haemodorum planifolium</i>	0.5	Black fruits; excellent for dry arrangements
<i>Banksia serrata</i>	5	Large, woody fruits; gnarled trunk
<i>Myoporum debile</i>	Prostrate	Pink fruits; spread to 1 m
<i>Clematis aristata</i>	Climber	Feathery fruits
* <i>Eucalyptus forrestiana</i>	6	Large, red fruits
* <i>Pandanus</i> spp.	Various	Large fruits for warmer climates
<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	3	Brown fruits suitable for dry arrangements
<i>Melia azedarach</i> var. <i>australasica</i>	8	Fruits attractive to parrots; deciduous
<i>Petrophile sessilis</i>	1	Yellow flowers, cone-like fruits
<i>Xylomelum pyriforme</i>	3	Large, pear-shaped wooden follicles

* Requires protection from frost.



Leptospermum lanigerum: *Leptospermum*—from the Greek, meaning slender seed; *lanigerum*, from the Latin, laniger, meaning fleecy or woolly and referring to the hairiness of the plant.



Haemodorum planifolium: *Haemodorum*—from the Greek, haima, meaning blood, and dōron, a gift (probably referring to the roots serving as food for the Aborigines); *planifolium*—having flat leaves (many *Haemodorum* sp. have terete leaves)

Plants resistant to salt spray

For people who live near the sea, a constant problem is the choice of suitable species to plant. Australia has a wide variety

of shrubs and trees which will resist such conditions and in fact thrive.

Recommended species	Approx height (metres)	Remarks
<i>Leptospermum laevigatum</i>	4	White flowers
<i>Westringia fruticosa</i>	1.5	White flowers most of the year
<i>Lagunaria patersonii</i>	8	Pink flowers; shapely tree
<i>Melaleuca armillaris</i>	5	White brushed, spread to 5 m
<i>Calocephalus brownii</i>	0.6	Grey foliage, rounded bush
<i>Hibbertia scandens</i>	Climber	Large yellow flowers
<i>Pelargonium australe</i>	0.4	Pink flowers
<i>Tetragonia implexicoma</i>	Prostrate	Succulent leaves; strong grower; small yellow flowers
<i>Enchylaena tomentosa</i>	0.5	Glaucous foliage, small red fruits
<i>Alyxia buxifolia</i>	1	White starry flowers
<i>Acacia cyanophylla</i>	5	Bright yellow flowers in spring
<i>A. longifolia</i> var. <i>sophorae</i>	2	Spreading bush to 4 m
<i>Correa alba</i>	1	White flowers in autumn
<i>Banksia integrifolia</i>	8	Yellow-green flowers
<i>B. serrata</i>	5	Green flowers; gnarled trunk
<i>B. spinulosa</i>	1.5	Yellow flower spikes often with dark styles
<i>Senecio lautus</i> ssp. <i>maritimus</i>	Prostrate	Yellow off-season flowers
<i>Scaevola calendulacea</i>	Prostrate	Blue flowers, spread 2 m
<i>S. aemula</i> (coastal form)	Prostrate	Showy blue flowers
<i>Casuarina distyla</i>	4	Useful foliage contrast



Leptospermum laevigatum: *laevigatum*—from the Latin, *laevigatus*, meaning smooth, slippery and referring to the shiny smoothness of the leaves

ACACIA VESTITA

The Hairy Wattle (*Acacia vestita*), sometimes called Weeping Boree, occurs naturally in a few localities on the western slopes and southern tablelands of New South Wales. As the two common names imply, the Hairy Wattle is a graceful, free-flowering shrub with weeping branches and hairy foliage.

It is a member of the *Mimosaceae* family and its roots, like those of other members of this family, have nodules or swellings containing nitrogen-fixing bacteria which help the plant assimilate its nitrogen requirements.

Planted in an open, well-drained position it forms a large, slightly spreading, bushy shrub up to 3 m high with a spread of 3 m. It may also tolerate heavy clay soils.

Flowering begins in early August and continues until October. Bright yellow flowers¹ are borne in dense globular heads 3 mm in diameter. The flowers are arranged in loose racemes 3 – 5 cm long.

The foliage consists of phyllodes—flattened or modified leaf stalks which serve the same functions as leaves. The phyllodes are obliquely ovate-elliptical in shape, 1 – 2 cm long and 5 – 10 mm wide with a fine point.

These small, soft, greyish phyllodes and branchlets are covered with tiny hairs. The weeping branches give the plant an attractive appearance even when it is not in flower, although when in flower it is among the more attractive wattles.

Pruning is necessary to maintain a healthy bushy shrub and should be done after flowering; it is advisable not to cut into old wood.

Propagation is by seed, which requires special treatment before sowing to allow water to permeate through the hard seed coat. Treatments include pouring boiling water over the seeds, rubbing seeds between two sheets of sandpaper, or scratching them with a file. For more information on these techniques see *Growing Native Plants*, Volume 2, page 29.

A light dressing of blood and bone twice a year in February and August is sufficient to produce satisfactory growth.

There has been no record of any pests or diseases attacking this species and it seems to be fairly resistant to root-rot fungus (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*).

¹ RHS Colour Chart, 1966, stamens, yellow group 5A.



Acacia vestita: *Acacia*—thought to be from a Greek word meaning to sharpen in reference to the first species discovered; another opinion refers to the Egyptian Thorn (akakia), a species of *Acacia* which yields gum arabic; *vestita*—a feminine form of *vestitus*, a Latin adjective meaning clothed

DIPLARRHENA MORAEA

Diplarrhena is a monotypic genus of perennial small herbs, which is endemic to Australia. Well-grown plants form thick clumps with long narrow leaves and white flowers¹. The flowers are faintly scented and are borne at the ends of slender stems. These plants belong to the family *Iridaceae* and closely resemble the widely cultivated exotic *Iris*.

Recently there has been a slight alteration to the spelling of this genus. It was originally spelt *Diplarrena*, but the correct spelling of the name is *Diplarrhena*.

Some botanists recognise two species in the genus *Diplarrhena*, but there is strong evidence to indicate that there is only one and the latter course is followed in this article. *D. moraea* can be quite variable and

Diplarrhena moraea: *Diplarrhena*—a Greek compound from *diplo-*, double, and *arrhen*, male, probably referring to the two fertile stamens; *moraea*—probably named after the South African genus *Moraea*, to which it is similar



the second species, *D. latifolia*, is regarded by most botanists as only a robust alpine form of *D. moraea*.

The Butterfly Flag (*D. moraea*) is a widely distributed monocot, found growing naturally on a variety of soil types in Victoria and Tasmania and in the south-east region of NSW. It is common in Tasmania where it is known as the White Iris.

Stiff Iris-like leaves are flat and linear in shape. These erect darkish-green leaves are 5–10 cm wide and 50–100 cm long.

Flower stems are usually longer than the leaves, reaching a height of around 100 cm. A number of flowers, from two to six, emerge usually one or two at a time from a single terminal head. Two green, narrow bracts subtend the white fragile flowers. The perianth consists of six delicate, white, obovate-cuneate segments with the three outer ones being about 2–3 cm long and 1–2 cm wide. The three inner segments are much smaller and more erect and are usually tinged with yellow or purple markings. Each flower contains three free stamens, with one being much shorter than the others and without an anther. The style is longer than the stamens and is three-branched.

Fruits are oblong three-celled capsules which split open when ripe, releasing large numbers of round flat seeds. These dark brown seeds germinate readily and this is the best method of producing large numbers of plants. Another method is to divide an existing clump into two or more pieces. This is a good method of propagation when only a few new plants are required, as instant mature plants are obtained.

Numerous basal leaves form dense tussock-like clumps about 20 cm in diameter. Because of their particular habit of growth, these plants make excellent specimens for use in permanent containers.

In Canberra Botanic Gardens, these attractive small plants have been successfully used in mass plantings. Plants can also be planted singly in a rockery or as a garden specimen. Most well-drained soils that are light in texture are suitable for its cultivation.

D. moraea flowers best in full sun, with the flowers appearing in spring and continuing until early summer. This long-lived species is frost hardy and responds to adequate water and fertilising.

Plants have shown good resistance to insect and disease attack, although the tips of some leaves do become yellowish and die off. The only pruning necessary is the trimming off of these unsightly leaves and the removal of the dead flower stalks.

¹ RHS Colour Chart, 1966, perianth segments, white group 155B.

ZIERIA CYTISOIDES

Zieria cytisoides is a low bushy tomentose shrub, with attractive grey-green foliage¹. This species is widely distributed and is found growing naturally in many parts of Australia's eastern States. The genus *Zieria* is confined to Australia and contains some twenty to twenty-three species.

In Canberra Botanic Gardens the Downy Zieria (*Z. cytisoides*) is growing particularly well, although perhaps not noticed by many visitors. It has thrived in an open position, on a soil that has been unfavourable to other species thus proving its hardiness. The soil is a heavy clay type that periodically alternates between very wet and dry.

Without any pruning at all *Z. cytisoides* forms an attractive compact shrub. The specimens in the Gardens have attained a height of 60–80 cm with a spread of 120–160 cm.

Zieria cytisoides: *Zieria*—after
M. Zier, a Polish botanist; *cytisoides*
—like *Cytisus*

Z. cytisoides belongs to the *Rutaceae* family, and if the foliage of the members in this family is crushed, it is strongly aromatic. This is due to the presence of oil glands in its leaves. *Z. cytisoides* has not the very colourful fragrant flowers of some of its cousins, but its handsome, all-year-round foliage makes it an ideal contrasting garden specimen. The foliage is, as its common name, Downy Zieria, implies, covered with fine, soft, short hairs, thus giving it this pubescent appearance.

Spring in the Gardens sees small clusters of inconspicuous flowers appear along the branches. The petals are pink or white 3–5 mm long and about twice as long as the sepals. The flowers closely resemble *Boronia*, but have only four stamens whereas *Boronia* has eight.

The leaves are trifoliate and the obovate to elliptical leaflets are 1–1.5 cm long, with their undersurfaces much greyer due to the presence of extra silky hairs. The margins of the leaflets are curved or rolled underneath.

In Canberra Botanic Gardens there has been no record of any pests or diseases attacking this species.

It does produce seed, but the best method of propagation is by cuttings. Cuttings 6–8 cm long taken at most times of the year are easy to strike. For more information on the propagation of plants by cuttings refer to *Growing Native Plants*, Volume 2, page 26.

¹ RHS Colour Chart, 1966, petals, white group 155B or D.



EUCALYPTUS CURTISII

In Canberra Botanic Gardens *Eucalyptus curtisii* has stamped itself as an ideal garden specimen. Its full ornamental potential has only just been realised and it is hoped that an adequate supply of seeds and plants will soon become available to the public from nurseries, forestry departments, etc. Visitors to the Gardens should make a special effort to sight this species, especially in December or January when large clusters of whitish flowers cover the tops of the branches. It is stressed here that collection of seed in Canberra Botanic Gardens is prohibited.

Plunkett Mallee (*E. curtisii*) is a very explanatory common name when the distribution of the species is investigated. It is only found growing naturally in a restricted area about 60 km south of Brisbane near Plunkett.

In its natural habitat it forms a Mallee-like shrub or small tree 2–7 m high. The main distinguishing character of Mallees is their lignotuber—a swollen mass of woody tissue that occurs at ground level from which a number of thin stems arise.

Seed of *E. curtisii* was first collected for Canberra Botanic Gardens in 1968. During that year the seeds were germinated and by the following autumn plants were ready for placement at the Gardens. After five years most have attained a height of 4 m with all specimens reaching 3 m. It could be safely stated that plants growing under Canberra's climatic conditions would not exceed beyond 5–6 m.

In an open sunny position the majority of specimens form slender trees with small but compact crowns. The main trunk usually divides into a number of branches. One plant is, however, showing Mallee characteristics (three stems arising from a common base) although by only gaining a height of 3 m it has a very attractive spreading habit.

Myrtaceae, the family to which Eucalypts belong, is a group of very attractive, adaptable and hardy plants suitable for cultivation in a wide range of situations. *E. curtisii* has shown some of these qualities, being frost

resistant and easily cultivated. One Mallee specimen has survived in a soil that remains waterlogged for a short period after heavy rain. The other trees are, however, definitely growing much better in a well-drained soil.

Mature leaves are alternate or occasionally opposite, 6–13 cm long and 10–25 mm wide. These lanceolate-shaped leaves are shiny green above and pale underneath. Lateral veins mark an angle of 50°–60° to the midrib. Only a few oil glands are present in the leaves and even when crushed the leaves are only slightly aromatic. The smooth, lightly coloured, silvery grey bark sheds in long ribbons. Flowers are borne in large corymbose panicles. Individual flowers are 2 cm across with the colourful constituents being the numerous stamens¹. Fruits are bell-shaped, 7–8 mm in diameter and appear in large clusters. Mature groups of unopened fruits are easily collected. When ripe, the brownish coloured seeds are released from their capsules. Seed germinates readily and this is the best method of propagation. Helpful information on the germination of seeds can be found in *Growing Native Plants*, Volume 2, pages 28–29.

Many Eucalypts are attacked by leaf-eating pests and scale. *E. curtisii* is disfigured by these leaf chewers, but they are easily controlled with an application of an insecticide containing carbaryl (such as Sevin or Bugmaster 80). Scale, if it presents a problem, is best controlled during October to November when young crawlers appear. Spraying with white oil during this time of the year usually provides control. For older mature scale it may be necessary to use a mixture of white oil with Rogor or Malathion to obtain complete control.

¹ RHS Colour Chart, 1966, stamens, near yellow group 4D.

Eucalyptus curtisii: *Eucalyptus*—a Greek compound from *Eu*, well, and *calyptos* or *kalyptos*, veiled or covered alluding to the calyx and/or petals which form a lid over the flower bud; *curtisii*—after Dennis Curtis, who first drew attention to the tree when collecting in its locality in 1923



CALLISTEMON BRACHYANDRUS

The Prickly Bottlebrush (*Callistemon brachyandrus*) is an easily cultivated species. It is found growing naturally on a wide range of soil types in the States of NSW, Victoria, and South Australia. In Canberra Botanic Gardens it forms a large bushy shrub growing to a height of 2–3 m with a spread of 3–4 m.

During the summer months, after most other *Callistemon* spp. have flowered, small red brushes up to 8 cm long cover the branches. The masses of stamens, which are the conspicuous parts of the flowers, are dark red with their anthers yellow¹. These

Callistemon brachyandrus:
Callistemon—from two Greek words, *kallistos*, most beautiful, and *stemon*, a stamen; *brachyandrus*—a Greek compound meaning short stamens from *brachy-*, short, and *-andrus*, adjectival form of *anthropos*, man



two characters combine to give the flowers the appearance of being dusted with gold. The five small petals and sepals, together with the pistils, are barely noticeable among the showy stamens.

Like so many of Australia's attractive native plants the inflorescence of *Callistemon* is composed of large numbers of small flowers grouped together. The flower arrangement in *Callistemon* closely resembles a bottle-cleaning brush and hence their common name Bottlebrushes.

The stiff, sharp-pointed leaves are much smaller and narrower than other *Callistemon* spp., being only 1.5–4 cm long and 1 mm wide. The undersurfaces of the linear leaves are typically dotted with oil glands. The young shoots are quite soft and hairy, much different from the mature needle-like foliage. This lush growth adds a very attractive greyish appearance to the shrub.

The fruit is a woody three-celled capsule, 5–7 mm in diameter. For propagation, collect the oldest fruits possible, and place them in a paper bag. Once the capsules have dried sufficiently they will open, releasing many tiny seeds. The process of drying out the capsules can be accelerated by placing them in a warm situation.

After flowering, pruning is beneficial in maintaining a healthy bushy shrub. Pruning need only consist of the removal of dead flower spikes and general shaping.

Like other *Callistemon* spp., this species has the ability to cope with poor drainage, growing equally well on wet or dry soils. It does, however, prefer full sun.

Most *Callistemon* spp. suffer from attack by scale insects, thrips and sawfly larvae. These three pests can cause considerable damage to the foliage. Thrips and scale insects badly disfigure the leaves and sawfly larvae can defoliate some species. In Canberra Botanic Gardens, *C. brachyandrus* has proved to be resistant to attack by these insects. If these pests should occur on this or other *Callistemon* spp. then scale and thrips may be controlled with an application of a mixture of white oil and dimethoate and sawfly larvae with carbaryl.

New plants can be readily propagated from seed. Tip cuttings of new season's growth can also be used as a means of producing additional plants.

¹ RHS Colour Chart, 1966, filaments, red group 45B, anthers near yellow-green group 153D.

GREVILLEA LONGIFOLIA

The Fern-leaf Grevillea (*Grevillea longifolia*) was formerly known as *G. asplenifolia*. Recent research by taxonomic botanists has applied the name *Grevillea asplenifolia* to the former variety, *G. asplenifolia* var. *shepherdii*.

Grevillea longifolia: *Grevillea*—after C. F. Greville, a one-time patron of botany and President of the Royal Society of London; *longifolia*—a Latin compound in feminine adjectival form from *longus*, long, and *folius*, leaved



The 'Toothbrush' Grevilleas to which *G. longifolia* belongs, form a group of species occurring in many parts of Australia. *G. longifolia* is mainly found within the Blue Mountains region, growing naturally along the banks of creeks and gullies. Here it develops into a large, spreading shrub with long saw-tooth leaves and red toothbrush flowers.

Grevilleas belong to the *Proteaceae* family, which shows great diversity of form. The name *Proteaceae* was called after the Sea God, Proteus, who was said to be able to change his form at will. The members of this family contain some of the most colourful species of Australian plants, cultivated for their striking forms and their ability to attract birds.

In Canberra Botanic Gardens this species has proven itself to be very reliable and hardy, growing to a height of 2.5–3 m with a spread of 5–6 m. Given a sunny well-drained position with a bi-yearly application of blood and bone, it easily reaches a height and spread of 2 x 4 m in four years.

Pinkish-red flowers cover the sweeping branches from spring through to summer¹. The individual flowers are arranged in one-sided racemes 4–8 cm long. The linear leaves have a slight rust-red tinge when young and their undersurfaces are covered with flat, silky brownish hairs. These serrated or rarely entire leaves are 12–28 cm long, 13–23 mm wide, with the serrations usually reaching halfway to the midrib. The fruit is a thin-walled follicle, which quickly turns brown and opens—so to collect the two seeds which each follicle contains, one must keep a close eye on them or cover the fruits with a bag.

Propagation from seed is unreliable as the species hybridises readily with other *Grevillea* spp. The progeny will thus be of uncertain type unless seed is collected from a natural source.

G. longifolia profits from after-flowering pruning, but it will withstand hard pruning if the plant becomes very lanky.

Propagation from cuttings is easily carried out. Tip cuttings of new season's growth taken in December or January will give the best results. Reasonable results are also obtained from cuttings taken during the other months of the year. Cuttings 12–20 cm long are ideal and take an average of four to eight weeks to strike.

This species has also proven itself resistant to insect and disease attack including *Phytophthora cinnamomi*.

¹ RHS Colour Chart, 1966, styles, near red group 49A.

HAKEA PROPINQUA

There are 130-odd species of *Hakea* which together form a very valuable group of most hardy and often attractive shrubs or small trees. There are at present at least sixty-five of these species growing successfully at Canberra Botanic Gardens of which *H. propinqua* is just one worthy of note; three other species in fact have received coverage in previous volumes of *Growing Native Plants*—*H. laurina* in Volume 2, *H. sericea* in Volume 3 and *H. verrucosa* in Volume 4.

H. propinqua belongs to that group of *Hakea* spp. known collectively as 'needle bushes'. The leaves of this group are cylindrical, sharp pointed and are arranged alternately around the stem. The cylindrical shape minimises surface area and hence aids in reducing water loss.

Hakea flowers generally are typical of the *Proteaceae* family, to which they belong, and can be said to resemble the flowers of *Grevillea*. The flower of *H. propinqua* has a fused perianth forming a tube 2–3 mm long through which the carpel protrudes. The anthers are sessile and located on the perianth lobes. Flowers may either be white or creamy yellow and appear in the axils of the upper leaves.

There appear to be two distinct forms of *Hakea propinqua* growing at Canberra Botanic Gardens. The first had its origin in the Wentworth Falls area of the Blue Mountains. Specimens of this form are low growing, being only 1.5–2 m high, rounded in shape and rather stiff. The older leaves lower on the stem are thickened to 2–3 mm in diameter and are 4–5 cm in length. The



Hakea propinqua: *Hakea*—after Baron Von Hake, patron of botany in the 18th century; *propinqua*—feminine form of *propinquus*, meaning near or related (the reason for the use of this epithet is obscure)

newer leaves are shorter and softer and arranged on reddish stems which are quite attractive. The flowers of this form tend to be creamy yellow.

The second form is a beautiful small tree with branches close to the ground, within 30 cm, giving an overall rounded shrub-like appearance. The red stems of the outer branches are arching which adds greatly to the beauty of this form. Specimens at Canberra Botanic Gardens are almost 4 m high after seven years with a spread of 4 – 4.5 m. The foliage on these specimens, growing in almost full sun, is quite dense. In comparison with the small form the leaves are longer (4 – 8 cm), finer (1 – 1.5 mm in diameter) and less rigid, but retain their sharp-pointed apex. Specimens growing in more shaded areas tend to be less dense and not as rounded as those which receive more sun. Specimens of this form had their origin in the Ku-ring-gai Chase area near Sydney. Flowers of the larger form tend to be more white than cream.

Both forms flower through winter into early spring and flowering is at a peak around July and August in Canberra.

The woody fruits which distinguish *Hakea* spp. from other *Proteaceae* members are a most attractive feature of both forms of *H. propinqua*. These follicles split open to release two seeds with black membranous wings. The fruits at all stages can be described as tuberculate but while green are particularly attractive. At this stage the warty protrusions are tipped with cream and separated by deep furrows. Towards the edges of the follicle and in particular at the base and apex the colour deepens and on the extremities is a deep mahogany brown. After some months the fruits dry and become very woody and may remain a feature of the plant for some years. A fully developed follicle on the smaller form may be 3 – 4 cm long and 2 – 3 cm across while on the larger form it may reach dimensions of 5 cm x 4 cm.

The ornament of sharp points on the leaves affords protection for the nests of some smaller species of birds. The Red-browed Finch and Banded Finch have been observed in the tall form of *H. propinqua* while wrens such as the Ground Wren or Superb Blue Wren have sought protection in the smaller form.

The tall version of this *Hakea* in an open sunny position will provide an excellent background screen, but its arching form as opposed to some of the stiffer *Hakea* forms will allow it to be grown as a specimen if so desired.

The two forms of *H. propinqua* that can be seen at Canberra Botanic Gardens were raised from seed collected from their respec-

tive forms in the wild. It would appear that seed is the easiest method of propagating either form. Mature capsules will open soon after picking to release their two seeds which germinate readily. There is no reason though why cuttings cannot be tried if desired.

H. propinqua will grow in most soil types and will survive periods of dryness although it is better to avoid this. Periods of extended wetness on poorly drained soils in warmer weather on the other hand may lead to attack by pathogenic root fungi.

All in all *Hakea propinqua*, like many other *Hakea* spp., is a hardy and attractive plant which should succeed in most gardens.



Hakea propinqua

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Pittosporum rhombifolium: *Pittosporum*—from the Greek, meaning pitch-seed, alluding to the resinous coating of the seeds; *rhombifolium*—with leaves of rhomboidal shape

Front—*Clematis aristata*: *Clematis*—the Greek name for a climbing plant; *aristata*—from the Latin, *arista*, meaning awn and referring to the bristle-like appendage on the seed

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